



**Students' Association
Film and Television Institute of India,
Law College Road,
Pune: 411004**

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When the Finance Minister (who also happens to be the current I&B minister) announced that FTII will be made into an 'Institute of National Importance', Students hoped that concrete and substantial measures will be taken to grant more autonomy to the Institute and upgrade academic and physical infrastructure. The first step in that direction would have been to appoint a Chairman of highest artistic attitude, one whose values are in sync with the vision and ethos of the Institute. Instead, bypassing all academic and Institute requirements, the ministry has appointed Mr Gajendra Chauhan who lacks academic, administrative and artistic credentials in the field of Art and Film education. He has no significant contribution/ work to even qualify as a footnote or a passing reference in the history of Indian cinema and television.

Some of the eminent personalities who have been FTII chairman in the past includes Mrinal Sen, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Shyam Benegal, U.R Anantha Murthy, Saeed Akhtar Mirza and many more. These people have been either Alumni of FTII or have had experience in serious Film practice or other Art forms. Their experience in their chosen field of work has brought in a vision to the functioning of FTII. This decision of the Ministry to appoint Mr. Chauhan is not only undesired but also brings the whole process of appointment into question.

FTII is a premier institute respected throughout the world for producing internationally reputed Film makers, Film Academicians and Independent Artists. We the students of FTII believe that such an appointment will not only undermine the relevance of the post but also set a wrong precedence for the future. We must never forget that FTII is a cultural hub that provides film education to students of different socioeconomic backgrounds from different parts of the country.

It is extremely sad that the government rather than enhancing the stature of many premiere institutes of the country has constantly tried to undermine the autonomy of these institutes by appointing partisan people with no merit. We see this decision in the light of continuing policies of the government to curb voices of all liberal and progressive art Institutions.

Unlike NFDC and CBFC where government has also meddled with the appointments, FTII is not going to take the bait. We strongly condemn the appointment of the new Chairman. We propose to the ministry to reconsider its appointment and also relook at the process of constituting the FTII society and its members. Until further clarity surfaces from the I&B Ministry, we continue to stand by our demands and mark our protest with a call for a strike.

We request all concerned citizens, artists, writers, performers, film makers, activists and alumnus of FTII to take notice and support our cause.

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